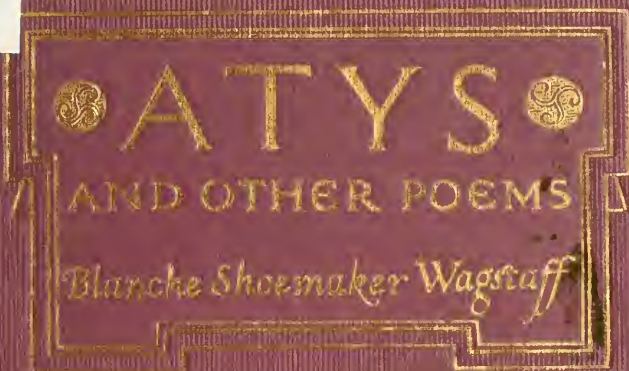


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ATYS

AND OTHER POEMS

Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff



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ATYS



AND OTHER POEMS

Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

By the Same Author

Woven in Dreams

The Song of Youth

ATYS
A GRECIAN IDYL
AND
OTHER POEMS

BY

Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff



NEW YORK
MITCHELL KENNERLEY
MCMIX

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S. a. W. d. 1841, 2. 2 / 15

TO MY HUSBAND

*Thought-flow'rs I bring thee, woven of my heart,—
And, dear, I lay them wholly at thy feet,
Hoping that thou wilt find their fragrance sweet
Since all these songs are of our Love a part!*

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ATYS

Atys: a Grecian Idyl

[Atys was a youth beloved of Aurora, who was slain by Sol, her father, and subsequently turned into a pine tree]

SCENE: *Olympia*



UPON a bank of dewy purple flow'rs
That sloped down to an amber rivulet,
Aurora leaned, clad in a shimmering
robe

Of roseate hue, with swelling bosom bared
To the wind's soft caress; her flowerlike feet,
Unsandalled, dipped like rosebuds in the waves.
About her sloping shoulders fell a stream
Of tawny tresses that enfolded her
In flaming strands of gold stol'n from the sun.
From under thoughtful brows her piteous eyes
Gazed darkly o'er the blossoming meadowlands;
Pale skies shot thro' with scarlet showed the dawn
Of a languorous Summer day, when sun flow'rs rear
Their yellow heads in the midsummer noons.
Afar the splendor of Olympia's fanes
Rose towering gray within the ashen clouds,

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

Tall Doric columns tinged with reddened hue
Like fiery brands of Zeus's fashioning,
While sombre Kronos, high-seat of the Gods,
Stood grimly 'gainst the sky, its woodlands dense
A smothering Maytime green.

And while the waves
Eddied in ambient flowers at her feet
Aurora sat and mused, watching the shafts
Of sunlight radiate the fields about.
Youth, like a gorgeous robe, enfolded her,
She was enwound within its magic mesh;
And in her heart there sang sweet melodies,
And in her blood burned Youth's unbridled fire.
She panted for sheer joy of life; her cheeks
Shone roses and her lips were as ripe fruit
Beseeching taste ere it drops to decay.
Her white neck was as the soft calyx-stem
Of a just-opened lily, made for kiss,—
Mysteriously shadowed in her hair,
The two half-hidden flow'rs of her breast
Showed pink, like blossoms underneath the snow.
Dreaming she leaned against the purple bank,
Her body nestling 'mongst the Irises,
For it was Spring and her soul longed for love.

Rolling like billows on a troubled sea
One sullen cloud crossed o'er the horizon,

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

Wafting the scent of sea-downs and the sedge
To where Aurora musing lay; and once
Above her fair, recumbent form it paused.
Bright fire shot from the amber skies, and then
Beside the purple bank all trembling stood
A youth with windblown curls and raiment tossed,
All flushed with flame and sprinkled with the dew.
Upon his pallid brow the night-black locks
Strayed wildly and his deep, refulgent eyes
Gleamed with a winter wildness. He was as
A hunted, untamed creature of the woods
Driv'n in the cloud-fall to the maiden's side.

Standing amid the swaying grasses, he
Turned full his gaze upon Aurora's face
Lain like a blossom on the sloping bank,
And in that glance he seemed to call her soul
In silent summoning deep into his own!

Aurora turned her famished eyes upon
His graceful form, and fed her soul thereby;
Such bodily beauty was as poetry,—
His grace and charm were sweet as music is,
For like a moving melody he came
And paused beside the stream. Then their eyes met
In speechless understanding, . . . There was no
need

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

For empty words—their natures met as one.
The Youth inclined his head; in the maid's glance
He read permission to his silent wish;
So without speaking he knelt down beside
The same soft bank Aurora leaned upon.
Below, the cadence of the little stream
Kept tuneful rhythm to their throbbing hearts.
Then like Auster's sweet sighing did the maid
In gentle accents speak: "O Boy, wherefore
Cam'st thou out of the sullen dawn? Art thou
A mere pale phantom of my musings, or
Beauteous reality come from above
To solace my poor, loveless youth with joy?"
With yearning eyes the Boy leaned nearer her
And answered thus: "O, goddess of the morn,
I came from far Arcadia o'er yon hill,
Where all my years were spent in ceaseless toil.
They call me Atys and I humble am,
A creature wise only in Nature's ways,
In the moon's phases and the season's change;
The sharp sting of the shower mothered me,
The woodland moss at night-time was my couch.
Alas—of late my ways were stricken sad,
For since my eyes beheld thee one bright morn
Within the chase, thy dewy tresses tossed
And throat bared to the sun's caress,—my soul
Has had no peace within its usaged ways,—

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

For I have wandered toilless, thro' the woods
Companioned by thine image . . . Yesterday
In sheer despair, a shepherd told me that
Were I to seek thee by the Claudius' stream
At dawn thou wouldst be bathing every day
And I would find thee wrapt in solitude."
His voice died on the wind and wandered on
Thro' the far recess of Aurora's soul,
As a cherished echo in a charnel dim.

The resplendent sun shone on the hast'ning stream
And turned the purple bank to violet
Where Atys closer leaned toward the fair maid
Who listening looked upon his face with love;
"Aurora, goddess of the morn, I speak
Not to thee thus but to thy mortal self,
The self that breathes and palpitates with youth,
The self I first saw in the woodland chase;
Thou art the sweet star of my friendless soul,
The fleeting fairy of my dreamy hours,—
The essence of the rose,—the savour of
The infinite sea; balm to the comfortless,
The flowerful semblance of the joyous Spring,
The sweet embodiment of Paradise;
The melody in the winds, the raiment of
The colorful rainbow that bedecks the sky;
Thou art the starshine of man's darkened nights,

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

The piloting spirit of his wayward paths,
Queen of Apollo's Arcadia, by far
More lovely and enthroned than Hera is,
Thy sunflamed tresses hide enchantment such
As Lethean streams have not; athwart thy breast
Of hyacinthine whiteness, shadows pass
Just as my lips would fain have will; the flow'rs
Could give no honey sweeter than what I
Would find upon thy lips in pasturing!
Thy delicate throat bends like a lily's stalk,
The amber crownèd head surmounting it
Is as a splendid marigold whose scent
Drives August bees stark mad with drowsiness . . .
The loveliness of thy wide golden brows
Turns me to madness, and th' engirdled waist
Is as the chain of Cester's that awoke
In all beholders irresistible love.
Thy sandalled feet like petalled flow'rs hid in
The straying grass, delight my famished eyes.
O maiden—but to see thee once was Heav'n,
And now to bend beside thy loveliness
Is such sublime delight I fear to die!"

Aurora's fair flushed face some paler grew,
And in a faltering voice she said: "O Boy,
Inspired spirit of the woodlands dim,
Within thy ardent eyes I read thy tale;

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

Within the gentle pressure of thy hand
I feel Felicity's precipitous dawn.
Within thy fervent words I find a love
Such as all women crave but few receive.
The youth throbs in my veins; I ne'er have loved
But languished without solace of my dreams;
'Tis but sufficient that I look on thee
To know that Heav'n has stooped for me at last!
O midnight clustered curls, I long to kiss
Thy sweet scents deep into my inmost soul!"

Then with a swaying motion, as a bough
Bends with the Autumn wind, Aurora leaned
O'er Atys and envelop'd him in embrace.
The mantle of her heavy tresses fell,
Enfolding and bewildering him as wine . . .
A stealthy dusk throbb'd o'er the sky and in
The far-off west, diffused the daylight paused
Ere seeking slumber pillowed on the hills.
The flowerful fields were fading in the pale
Lavender light the sunset wings still shed.
The tremulous winds were drowsy with dark night;
The river waves that stole along the shore
Were songless with infusive sleepiness,
And Darkness with a grim persistency
Lurked in the wild nooks and the sheltered spots,
Fearful to show its face before the wood

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

Where shadowed 'neath bent boughs the lovers sat
Talking of Love and the Eternal joy . . .
Dawning within their love, felicity
Had filled their hearts and all thro'out the day
In close communion they had whiled the hours
In happiness, unthinking of Time's flight.
For in great love, Time is effaced; one knows
Not of its passage—for one seems to lose
The vital hold upon the visible world
And soar within infinitude of joy.

Atys' white brow grew clouded as the dark
Obscured his vision of the loveliness
Of her who lay enfolded in his arms.
The close-leaved boughs above made their sweet nook
E'en more sequestered seem, and shadows dark
Stole o'er their brows upturned in happy love.

“ Ah, Sweet,” said Atys bending to her kiss,
“ Cruel shadows sever sight from me, and I
Can only feel thee resting on my breast—
And smell thy tresses' aroma—just as
An unseen flow'r's loveliness that lies
Hid 'neath the chaliced snows, a relic of
The fragrant Maytime freshness vanished o'er.
And now I weep to think that night is come—
Night that should be our own, but yet is not.”

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

Aurora stirred upon the grass and spoke:
"O love of mine! This is our hour of hours,
We shall imbue a mortal passion with
The fumes of immortality, and spend
Our youth in sweet communion, for too soon
Comes Death with its atoning misery . . .
Love me this hour I beg of thee, and well,
Ere hurrying dawn will fell our scheme of joy."
And as she spoke she threw herself into
Her lover's arms in sweet abandonment . . .
But of a sudden thunder loud arose,
A din of basso notes that shook the air,
Reverberant echoing in the woodland dells;
The pine-trees swayed in terror and their tall
Towering limbs shed leaves affrightedly;
Great gusts of wind swept fiercely, scattering
Blossoms, within the mutinous air surcharged
With the storm's fury,—and the lovers lay
Blinded and mute with fear, their hands entwined
Despairingly, and their eyes closely shut
As if excluding vision of the scene,
So terrible upon their eve of love.

It was the warning of omnipotent Sol
Who had invoked the aid of Jupiter,
With Vulcan's workmen, the cruel Cyclopes,

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

For being powerless with his shafts of sun,
At night, he strove to thus condemn Love's joy.

Then wild winds shook the forest, and the stream
Sobbed loudly on the shore, while lightning gleamed
Within the darkened skies and thunder roared
As monsters rant in ravenous famishment.
The wooded glens were shaken with the storm,
While a deep voice arose from out the clouds:
"Mortal and goddess wed not on this night,
Else Sol's stern anger is incurred thereby."

Within the rampant winds there rose the sound
Of frantic kisses flung defiantly . . .
But still the scarlet flames from Heaven flared
And smote with thunderbolts the woodland spot
Where love had reigned supreme a while before.

Then Atys with blanched face arose in fright,
His trembling lips turned dumb,—and thus he fell
Heavily to the mossy earth, smote by
Unerring aims of Toriteaulis' bolt.
His quivering body lay beneath the trees
White like a rain-drenched flower, with his long
Black clustered curls in piteous disarray,
While o'er him bent the weeping form of her
Who loved and lost and bathed him in her tears.

ATYS: A GRECIAN IDYL

EPILOGUE

Upon the summit of green Kronos, where
The Sun forms diamonds for Juno's crown
And leafy bows shed shadows numberless—
A pine-tree stands in mute tranquillity,
Its handsome boughs held high in princely pride.
And every morn with dawn Aurora comes
Aflush with joy to worship in its shade,
And to renew the raptures of her love.

SONGS OF DISTANT LANDS

THE BAY OF ALGIERS



VIOLET dusk hangs softly o'er the Bay,
And golden evening, amorous of the
day,

Watches the purple waves that sing a far

Where glows the radiance of an early star
That bashful-eyed, gleams fitfully in the sky.
A Springtime blossom-scent is in the breeze,
While towering, sentinel-like, the cypress trees
Loom loftily on the hills. One sunset wing
Floats far above, and amber shadows fling
Their rich tints on the sea's edge, glistening white.
Dusk gathers fast,—and with the blue day's flight
There falls the speechless wonder of the night.

RAIN AT SAKKARA



LIKE gloomy ghosts of sweeter sunshine
past,
The leaden clouds steal o'er the color-
less sky.

As far as eye can reach the white sands lie
Untrod and billowed as the waves at sea.
Aurora's smothered rays invisibly
Hide in the heav'ns; the desert still and vast
Is swept by torrent winds that hurl the sand
Mountainously high in one great blinding cloud,—
A scented rainfall fills the silent land—
The voice of singing show'rs laughs aloud.

SUNSET ON THE IONIAN SEA



BEHIND the amethystine isles, the sun
Sinks down in measured silence, while
upon

The sky dim heights of towering Heli-
con

The crimson wings of daylight flutter still,
Strewing the snowy slopes with roseate streams
That fade into the valley's moonless dreams
In paler hues, beneath each sheltering hill.
The evening violet of the watchful sea
Is purpled with the sun's inveteracy,
Till o'er the wave-wide space, an outcast bird
Flies suddenly in affright, for it has heard
Night's footsteps deep within the woodlands stirred.

A CAMEL BOY IN THE SAHARA



BROWN-LIMBED and lithe, he lies beside
the fire
Watching the flames with eyes that
never tire,
Eyes dark with dreams. His slender-featured face
Round which the dusky evening shadows trace
A frame, is like a cameo cut in stone,
Of a rich bronze hue of the desert's own.
About his amber, languid limbs is wound
A tattered burnous, and his brow is bound
By heavy ropes such as all Berbers wear.
The music of the tom-tom fills the air
As Kabyle songsters sound a joyful tune.
Above shines the great splendor of full moon
Shedding a snowy argence on the sand,
Night in the desert,—night in Nomadland . . .

PASTELLE AT SEA



THE lilac line of shore, a shimmering
frame

For the waves' ardent blue Sea; meadow-
lands

Flecked with foam-flow'rs, white buds that know
no name.

Faintly dusk-shadows tremble in the sky
Where Darkness, wanton-eyed, aloofly stands,
Lulled by the music of the sea-gull's cry.

IN THE DESERT



LOWLY the white moon climbs into the
sky,
Spreading a shimmering carpet on the
sands,

Glistening, the silver stars come out on high . . .
But all the wonder of the night-time lies
Within the eloquent touch of lover's hands,
The glory of the night in meeting eyes . . .

FROM THE ACROPOLIS



FROM far Corinthian climes the golden
sun

Streams softly o'er the bay of Phaleron;
While wandering clouds caress the purple
seas,

Melodiously moved within the rhythmic breeze
That floats in dulcet and diluted strains
Across the misty, springtime-scented plains,
To where upon the height o'er Athens stands
The delicate splendor of celestial lands
The Parthenon in all its majesty,
Gazing upon the world immutably.
The Erectheum with no grandeur gone,
Has seen long centuries pass in Pagan dawn.
Here Phidias' magic hands have left the trace
That neither Death nor Kingdoms could erase;
Here stood Athena in her chasteness fair;
Here shone the noble deeds of heroes rare;
Here glory, power, zeal, and courage met
Under Athenian skies of violet.

Ah strange, the hand of Time dispels such charms,
Lays Glory low, wipes out the race, disarms
A world-wide pow'r. To-day there but remains
The ghost-like semblance of the past domains.
Tho' still the same Ægean winds blow free . . .
Kymodoke yet lingers by the sea
In Nereus' shade; and tho' the years go by
The Grecian splendors dim but do not die.

SHELLEY'S HOUSE AT PISA



UPON the turbid Arno whose swift stream
Of lucent waters green with the sun's
gleam

Lures many souls to death, a gaunt
house stands

Gray in the pallid shade of Winter's hands;
Its staring windows, shutterless and blind,
Shudder with the violent onslaughts of the wind,
While the barred, impenetrable door
Admits of visitation now no more.

Within, the empty chambers dark and dim
Preserve the sacred memory of him

Who once long years ago, when Pisa's pow'r
Was at its height, here left his lifetime's dower
Of lovely lays; here sang his sweetest songs
As an inspired bird, whose soul belongs
Not to this earth, but to a celestial spot.

His strains of music shall live unforgot,
Thro'out the numberless years that are to be:
Death cannot blight his fame's infinity—

His memory is as deathless as a star
That shines within a heavenly height afar!

DREAM-FLOWERS

INFINITY



ET me not live when thou art no more
here!

For when thine eyes are closed in final
rest

My weary head shall lie upon thy breast
Pillowed in perfect peace. I shall not fear
The hour when Death claims thee, for I shall go

With thee thro'out the gates of Paradise,
And in the Promised Land twain souls shall know
The happy heaven of each other's eyes!

LET LOVE SPEAK FORTH



LET love speak forth in deeds, just as the
Spring

Is heralded within the woods in May,
When tulips rear their heads and blithe
birds sing

Upon the leafy boughs. No lips could say
What treasured store lies in a tender heart.

Let love be mute! Silence could ne'er conceal
The blossom of the soul, nor speech impart
The inward perfectness love's deeds reveal!

MEMORY'S GARDEN



WITHIN a perfumed garden of the Past
Fair flowers spread their petals in the
sun :

Some crimsoned with the dawn-glow,
and some pale

With wannest lily beauty, white as nights
Filled full of argent moonlight. Withered buds
There are some of, their yellow leaves grown dry:
These are the sorrows that my heart has known
In years gone by . . . Each Rose recalls a joy,
Each Lily a fair moment in my youth;
Sweet garden of the Past, my memory!

DIVINE PRESENCE



KNOW that you are near me, tho' I can
Not see you;—tho' the vivid hours bar
My soul from sight of you—I still can
scan

The invisible region where I feel you are
Hid from me somewheres like a silver star,
Clothed in a filmy cloud and veiled from earth.
Each night that to a blushing day gives birth
I feel your presence near me as a flow'r—
Whose perfume sheds upon my life a show'r—
And yet I meet you not. The long days pass
As shadows steal across the windblown grass.

When in a churchly edifice one can feel
The presence of Divinity o'ersteal
One's soul in its sweet charm, so sacredly
The Spirit of your love companions me.

SPIRIT HANDS



HANDS that I loved long years ago—

Dear hands.

Caressive as the desert breezes blow,

They call to me across the sands,

Across the waste, wild prairie lands;

For once they were my own

To kiss and fondle and entwine

With mine.

My fragrant flow'rs the summer suns had sown,

Pink-petalled finger-tips

(Heaven to my lips!)

Sweet violet veins that trace

And keep the pressure of a lost embrace.

They were such white hands,

Pale as the new-lain snow on winter lands;

Dear hands of my delight,

They call to me thro'out the moonless night—

Hands that caressed me long ago—

I love you so!

MAY'S FAIRYLAND



It is the season now to go
Into May's fairyland—
Where happy, hand in hand,
We two can watch the green buds grow,
And breathe the lilac breezes blow
Within the woods' wild loveliness.
Oh, come, my love, with me,
And lie 'neath yonder tree,
Whose shadows are a fond caress.

It is the season now for those
Who scent love's Spring.
The birds are caroling
Of youth that never has a close.
Our May shall be like to the rose
That never dies: Winter is o'er,
And happy, hand in hand,
In May's sweet fairyland
We two shall wander evermore!

HEART-FLOWER



SWEETER to me than Life seems sweet
at Death,
When the last gradual decrease of
breath

Shows that the end is near—Ah, sweeter far
Than the shimmering silv'ry radiance of a star
Is to the chaste white waves so long unwed;
More dear than Heav'n is to the lonely dead,
More sweet than sunshine to the famished flow'r,
Fairer than a rainbow after a sharp shower,
Lovelier to me than Amphion's melodies,
Than rare, fine wine that soothes the soul to ease—
Sweeter than all else in the world thou art,
A sacred flow'r hidden in my heart.

SOUL-SWEETNESS



WHAT do I love him for? His lustrous
eyes

Of mirrored sea-change, deep as yonder
wave:

Or yet the wonder of his spirits rise

When laughter woos him from reflection grave.

Or is it for the tender suppliant way

He has in seeking me at close of day

To put his head upon my breast and say

A thousand times he loves me? Is it for
His ardent lips or gentle hand's caress,

Or yet his midnight locks that I adore?

Not for these charms I love him,—nor not less

Were he to lack them: nay, I worship more
The Inner-Being in its loveliness!

LOVE WAS A FLOWER



LOVE was a flow'r that craved the tenderest care,
Sweet, fragile Love that tended grows more fair,

A petalled fragrance dreamy like dim skies
Illumining life more than the bright sunrise.
A shimmering blossom full of golden dower,
Love was a flower.

Cold sea-winds blew along the amber shore
Where white flow'rs glisten'd on the bank no
more . . .

For withered buds bent on a barren bough,
Our poor, untended Love has perished now.
'Twas born eternal, but it lived an hour,
Love was a flower.

PRAYER



LET the Sun always shine as now, O
Lord!
And the bright grass shimmer on the
sloping sward,
And the gold bees laugh with all their honey
stored . . .
Let the Sun always shine as now, O Lord!

Life is a transient sunbeam on the wing:
Joy is fleeter than are the hours of Spring,
Vanishing swift as skylarks when they sing;
Life is a transient sunbeam on the wing!

Let the light never darken on my way.
Lord, be the watcher of my life each day,
And let me die ere Winter chases May—
Let the light never darken on my way!

SONG



WHAT is the world compared to you,—
To having you, holding you, finding you
true?

Is there a heart-gain half as sweet
As when you kneel at my feet
Loving me, telling me you are mine?
Is there a victory more divine
Than that I am loved,—and loved too well?
Dearest, the aims of those who dwell
In the empty world are so mean compared
With our Hope of loving,—of having shared
This long life together, and then to be
One in a timeless Eternity . . .

LOVE SUPREME



LET the world with its futile aims pass
away,
For I care not whether darkness tinge
the day,
Nor whether the stars within the heavens stay—
(Let the world with its futile aims pass away!)

Life is so ruthless: the efforts of man are vain,
Let me have peace and the world forsworn again.

The terrible strife of mankind! to what does it tend?
Only the grave and oblivion's desperate end.

Let the world with its futile aims pass away:
Let me have peace in a perfect passion's sway;
So long as we Love, what matters the darkest day?
(Let the world with its futile aims pass away!)

AUGUST



UGUST is here; within the ivy leaves
The bees make mournful music, and the
sea

Is pale with presaged Autumn and wild
songs

Wanton upon the waves . . . Strange spirits
speak

Within the dusk-winds; phantom-hands implore
Sweet Summer back again. The sunshine stands
Reluctantly upon the mountain-top

Smiling farewell to the awaiting waves.

Already evening brings a scent of frost,

And late the white dew lies upon the lawn.

The harvest moon grows pallid in the sky,

And far the stars seem on their sapphire thrones.

August is here, and soon September's chill

Will fade the flowers in their glowing beds;

Love, only Love, survives the Season's change.

DECEMBER'S FLOWER



UPON a drear, white Winter's day,
When snow upon the meadows lay,
And all the memories of May
Were with the roses laid away,
There burst upon the wintry gloom
A fairy flower, all a-bloom,
Whose sweet, soul-scent made glad the hour;
December's sullen heavens smiled,
For there was born of love, a Flower—
The Lily-Spirit of a Child!

SONG OF THE SPRING



SING of the woods where the languid
mosses dwell,
Of the shimmering forests of May
which the sun loves well,
Of the gleaming gold of the jonquil buds that
sway
In the soft caress of the evening breeze at play.

I sing of the silver stars that shine in the sky,
Of the argent glow of the moonbeams fluttering by,
Of the rainbow surf that breaks on the pallid sand,
Of the purple sea embracing the blossom-land.

I sing of the meadows a-bright with flowery dew,
Of the scarlet starling that soars from the desert
blue,—
With the birds I sing of Love, Youth and all
things gay,
For I am Delight, the Woodland Spirit of May!

FALLING LEAVES



HAVE watched the falling leaves
Day by day,
Doffing their gold garments for drear
gray,—

I have watched their wistful flight
Through the dark,
In the night-time paused to hark
To their musical refrain,
Falling, falling from the trees
In soft melodies;
Drifting, drifting into space,
With the breezes play,
Musical wanderers, windblown far away.

WHEN TULIPS RAISE THEIR SCARLET
HEADS



He will not come this year when tulips
raise
Their scarlet heads within Aurora's
gaze;

Spring will be blighted with a bitter lack,
Nothing on earth can ever bring him back
To my lorn heart that he has vanished from—
He will not come.

Blithe May will bring a pageant for the fields,
Lighting the world, which now Niobe shields,—
But he is buried with a last year's rose
'Neath a hyacinthine sepulchre of snows.
Spring will arrive with all its glad voice dumb.
He will not come . . .



LONG ARE THE NIGHTS



LONG are the nights without the stars,
The glimmering, radiant, silvery stars—
That shine like dewdrops in the sky,
A dreary dearth of light on high
In desert places of the sky—
(Long are the nights without the stars!)

Lone is the life without its love,
Without its blessing of a love,
To scent the weary winter hours
With perfume of the fairest flowers;
O unillumined, loveless hours!
(Lone is the life without its love!)

SIX MONTHS OLD



ONLY a glimpse of Seraph-land,
A glimmer from above
That dwelt a little while;
The rosebud softness of a hand,
Two eyes upturned in love;
The heaven of a Baby's Smile!

REVELATION



WHAT words can show my hidden soul to
yours?

What speech reveal my being as it
calls

Across the breach of self's surmountless walls?
Futile are words,—a lover's voice assures,
And yet the utterance of his heart is still . . .

For it is only in the silent spell
Of rapt caress that breathing kisses tell
What we have striv'n to speak. 'Tis in the thrill
Of answering sense to sense that I but know
Your inner being's message unto me;
Bared in the bliss of meeting lips, I see
Your soul stand naked in the sunlight's glow!

RONDEAU



THE days gone by—they were so very
sweet:

I wonder if my spirit-self shall meet
Them resurrected in the world to be,
That vast, beneficent eternity
Whence all things lovely pass to when they die—
Dear days gone by.

Tears never touched their loveliness,—they were
Like fragrant flowers the cruel winds could not stir—
No time can dim their fairness, for they seem
Still golden to me in my memory dream—
O petal-shed hours, your stalks are lean and dry—
Dear days gone by.

They were so perfect that the gods deemed wise
To take them from me—but their ghosts arise
And moan like plaintive children to be nursed
Into my arms again; and so immersed
In memory can I help but hear their cry—
Dear days gone by?

TRANSLATIONS

CHANSON

[ALFRED DE MUSSET]



WHEN fate is cruel and takes away
The hope of day
And spirits gay;
The remedy for misery
Is melody
And Beauty!

'Tis good to find a lovely face
That will efface
In one embrace
All sadness; and to hear above
Sweet airs sung of
An old-time love!

RONDEAU

[ALFRED DE MUSSET]



Only ten years from to-day
Thou wilt, perchance, less unkind be.
In truth 'tis somewhat far away,
But love will come to thee to stay,
And make winged youth but faster flee.
Thy loveliness bewitches me.
Ah guard it carefully, therefore,
I shall have gladder word of thee
In ten years more.

When the time comes, Oh, I implore
To be thy sweetheart, if I may;
I shall be perfect, faithful, for
I do not like inconstancy,—
And thou far lovelier then will be
In ten years more!

RONDEAU

[ALFRED DE MUSSET]



AS it ever my heart's joy to see
Manon sleeping in my arms? Below
Her pretty face, a perfumed nest of
snow,

Her wakeful heart-beats gently turning slow.
Is it a dream that stirs me blissfully?

Just like an eglantine in which the bee
Is in its chalice folded,—long ago
Did I fold her in tenderness to me?
Ah, was it ever so?

But daylight comes: Aurora's scarlet glow
Scatters within the winds its Springtime glee.
Her comb in hand, pearls in her ears, I know
That at her mirror Manon forgets me!
Love without morrow always brings heart woe,—
Ah, was it ever so?

ALONE

[HENRIK IBSEN]



HAVE accompanied the last guest as far
as the gate,
As far as the gate of the villa.

Farewell has died in the wind of the night.

The garden and the house until now have resounded
With the harmonious sounds of her voice.

The silence is terrifying.

Before she had gone I was full of the joy of life;
And now I am alone, all alone . . .

IN AN ALBUM

[HENRIK IBSEN]



I CALLED thee my fairy,
I named thee my star—
Good God, thou art all these in truth.
Alas, a fugitive fairy,
A star, a fleeing star
That is dimming in the distance!

THE WATER-LILY

[HENRIK IBSEN]



SEE, my well beloved, I bring thee
This flow'r, whose petals float
Upon the silent waters, while the waves
Rock it into Springtime dreams . . .

Dost wish to take it with thee?
To adorn thy breast, my beloved?
Under the leaves it shall be hidden
In a profoundly silent sea . . .

Child, be careful not to dream
Too near the dangerous waves.
The little ripples are feigning sleep
Beneath the entangled lilies . . .

Your breast is the light wave,
'Tis dangerous to draw near it!
The intermingled lilies on the surface
And the little ripples feigning sleep . . .

IN THE TEMPEST

[HENRIK IBSEN]



THE sky threatens, the clouds burst
And suddenly the tempest rolls the
waves
Like a very river . . .

The storm becomes intensified;
The sea springs up, roaring, howling.

Then the tempest calms . . . The waves flee,
And the torrent becomes only a little stream . . .

Some drops of shining water sweetly sing,
And glide away like pearls among the leaves.

The sand beds become dry again and parched
As they were in the torrid days . . .

But still one hears the sound of dripping water
Upon the dry woods and among the leaves.

Forever shall I cherish that sweet night:
The distant sounds seem yet the murmuring sea . . .

THE ALBATROSS

[HENRIK IBSEN]



THE Albatross lives only on the borders
of the earth.

It bathes its massive wings in the foam
of the sea;
And it glides upon the waves without sinking.

It descends and mounts as the sea.
During lovely weather it is silent, but it cries during
the tempest.

Like a dream suspended between sky and abyss
This bird neither flies nor swims.

Heavier than air, and lighter than the wave,
Bird-poet, bird-poet, this is thy lot!—

SONG OF A BIRD

[ALFRED DE MUSSET]



N a beautiful day of Spring,
Attracted by the strange charm of mys-
tery,
I followed a lonely alley-way.

The west breeze was sweet;
Blue was the sky,
While in the branches of a lime tree
Chirped a bird-mother feeding her little ones.

And there I discerned a thousand charms
In the poetic scene;
While two large brown eyes in amazement
Laughed down at me.

Above my head the chirping of the birdlings
Mingled with the song of the birds;
And ere I knew it, I passed on
Ne'er to return . . .

And now alone, in fancy
I stray again within the alley-way;
While the cries and the songs of the birds
Follow me always.

SONG OF A BIRD

The warble I had heard,
The immortal voice,
Made for me a poem.

This poem all birds sing,
Because of their green shelter
All the little songsters
Chant of the loveliest Springtime days . . .

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